

LATER FROM PORT ROYAL.

INTERESTING FROM CHARLESTON.

Account of Vessels Running the Blockade.

THE CITY SURROUNDED WITH INTRENCHMENTS.

IMPORTANT STATEMENTS BY A CONTRABAND.

Strange Confusion of a Union Skipper.

Growth of Union Sentiments in Florida.

REPORTED EVACUATION OF PENSACOLA.

The Skidaway Battery Abandoned.

The First Defense of Wilmington River Yielded.

The United States steam transport Empire City, Capt. Baxter, from Port Royal, March 27, arrived at this port last evening.

The transport Oriental, from New-York, arrived on the 23d, all well, and could leave for New-York on the 28th.

The troops are in excellent health.

From Our Special Correspondent.

PORT ROYAL, March 26, 1862.

News from Charleston was brought this morning by the U. S. gun boat Flamborough, Lieut. Commanding Upham, one of the squadron blockading that port. I am indebted to her commanding officer for the following interesting details, obtained by him from a party of five negroes, who escaped from the city in the night, and in a small boat reached the Florida, Commodore Goldsborough, yesterday morning, at sunrise.

The English iron steamer Commerce, nineteen days from Liverpool, arrived at Charleston, March 10, having run in by Rattlesnake Shoal, and so through Maff's Channel, to the Harbor. It is to be remembered that this is the point at or near which the second stone fort was sunk, in order to prevent vessels from avoiding themselves of the passage between the shoal and Long Island, where it was hazardous for blockading vessels to lie, both on account of the shoal and the batteries on shore. The Commerce brought a cargo of woollens, shoes, arms, and ammunition, and is now loading in Charleston with cotton, and expecting to run the blockade and return to England.

The Calawha arrived three weeks since, and is now loading with cotton, hoping to do the same thing. The ship Mackinaw is also in port, loading with cotton and bound for an English port. One brig and two or three schooners, destination unknown, are taking in the same cargo. On the 23d inst. the steamer Caroline ran in about 11 o'clock at night from Nassau, with an assorted cargo. The pilot-boat Chase arrived on the same day from the same place, loaded with salt. The Cecil and the Ella Warley are daily expected, also from Nassau—the Ella being the old Isabel, and having run in and out within two months, escaping the squadron when she last entered by help of a fog, but getting a shot in her stern from the Monitor.

It need not be supposed, however, that the blockade of Charleston is entirely ineffective. The number of vessels that have succeeded in getting in is an evidence of the great difficulties in the way of making it perfect. The Florida, James Adger, Sumter, Flamborough, and Onward are the present blockading squadron—the Flamborough being here only for needed repairs, and to return in a day or two. No vessels of any draft enter the main ship channel, where the first stone fort was successfully sunk and is still an effective barrier. But the skill and ingenuity of the Charleston pilots are very great. Whenever a vessel is running out, small boats precede her with lights along Maff's channel; while for vessels from the outside signals are arranged, or they have pilots on board whose knowledge, aided by darkness and fog, enables them to baffle the vigilance of the blockading squadron. Nor is any blockade often—perhaps never—so effectual that no vessel eludes it.

Two lines of intrenchment entirely surround the city of Charleston, the nearest at a distance of two miles and a half, the outer five miles from the city. Extensive fortifications have been erected on Ashley River, three miles distant, and strong works also on Cooper River, four miles from Mount Pleasant. James Island, considered to command an important approach to the city, is strongly fortified and numerously garrisoned. It has long been known that the river from Stono to Charleston is obstructed by piles. Every effort has been and continues to be made to strengthen the defenses on all sides and in the harbor. The famous battery-batteries built and used for the attack on Fort Sumter, now lies moored near Fort Johnson, which is only an open earthwork, for its support and protection.

There are but two armed steamers in Charleston harbor—the Lady Davis and a tug. The former came down to Port Royal at the time of the bombardment, and being obliged to return by the inside passage, was lightened by the removal of all her passengers, stores, coal, and, finally, even the machinery, in order to get her over a shoal in one of the inlets. Strenuous efforts are making to build a broad-gauge gunboat, and every means is resorted to in order to raise money. Concerts and theatricals are made to contribute, and exhibitions of negro minstrelsy, in which the performers have no need of charcoal to appear in character, has been given for the same object. Even slaves are solicited for offerings.

The vessel was commenced, one of the negroes thinks, three or four days since, and is expected to be ready within a month. When the iron steamer Commerce arrived, as above stated, on the 10th, it was proposed to purchase and plate her, but she was found to be too light, and an offer was then made for her boiler and machinery, which her agents refused; and, as she is an English steamer, the Rebels were obliged for once to forego the luxury of stealing her—in other cases their habitual pleasure and profit. In some Charleston papers found at Jacksonville, Fla., I saw numerous appeals to patriotic citizens to contribute toward the building of gunboats, though nothing was there said about iron-plating—a change of plan no doubt due to the Monitor-Merrimack fight. Concerning this latter, the Charleston papers admitted that 12 men were killed on board the Merrimack; that her smoke-stack was shot away, and that she went into Norfolk in a sinking condition. The first report stated that Com. Buchanan was wounded, the second announced his death.

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by hunger that they broke into the bakeries and seized their contents, offering North Carolina money in payment, and when that was refused as worthless, they carried off the bread defiantly.

Many of the country troops had died from the use of army biscuits, and the Commissary Department was obliged to issue corn for the soldiers' rations. Cotton thread is 25 cents a spool; needles a hundred times the usual price; matches one cent each; and it is a curious illustration of the Southern lack of mechanical ingenuity that though they succeeded in manufacturing a few matches, they cannot make the boxes to hold them. Very little business is done in the city. The stores are mostly closed, their stocks of goods being exhausted without means of renewal.

Fugitives are constantly leaving the city for the interior, and others preparing to move at the moment of assault. It is universally asserted and believed that the place is to be attacked by a concerted movement on all sides on the 15th of April, with overwhelming land and naval forces. The necessity of surrender, and the policy of giving up the place without fighting, since it must eventually fall, are openly discussed in the city; and it is not long since a party of officers came to blows on the question in a public conversation. Troops have lately been sent from Charleston to Georgetown, S. C., in expectation of an attack. On the line of road from Charleston to Savannah are about 30,000 troops. In rear of the city are very few cannon, and only two have been mounted.

The party of negroes who brought this information consisted of one woman and four men. They are very intelligent in appearance and frank in conversation, and the statements are considered more than usually trustworthy. Rosa Barnwell is the woman's name; her husband's Thomas Scanlon. To facilitate her escape, she had put on a suit of his clothes. When they reached the Florida, the morning was bitterly cold, and the whole party had suffered greatly. They were kindly received by Commander Goldsborough, and were sent down by the Flamborough to be placed in charge of the Superintendent on shore at Port Royal.

Since writing the above, I have seen and talked with the negro Thomas. He is a tall, erect, expressive-looking man, with a well-shaped head, explosive features, steady eye, heavy mustache, and quiet black. His personal history is singular, and quite adventurous. Both he and his master, Mr. Scanlon, were apprentices in the same blacksmith's shop at the same time. They learned this trade together, and I don't doubt from what I learn of the master, that Tom is the better workman. After the war began he was taken by his master first to Fort Moultrie, where he served during the attack on Sumter; then to Fort Sumter itself, then to Fort Walker, at Hilton Head, where he spent the three months before its bombardment, as blacksmith and armorer, and was in the Fort during the action. His master was a Lieutenant in the Rebel service, and Tom's quarters were in an attic-room of the very house in which I am writing, near division headquarters. The room opposite this was the office of Dr. Hunt, the Rebel surgeon, who was killed in the fort. Tom's account of the action is clear and extremely interesting. One incident is too characteristic of South Carolina chivalry to be omitted. The fire from the fleet grew so hot after a while that the soldiers near where he was stationed refused to carry the shot and shell to the guns, whereupon the officers ordered him to take their place, and he discharged that duty till the rout commenced. It seems tolerably clear that under the Confederation act which offers freedom to the slaves as a premium for service to their Rebel masters, he is entitled to his.

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It had been proposed that all the silver plate in the city should be given to the Government to be melted and the proceeds applied to the building of the iron-clad gunboat, but the suggestion had not met with universal favor. No specie was circulated. Tom declared that since he came ashore at Port Royal, he had seen a ten cent piece for the first time in three or four months. The only currency was Confederate and State bank notes, and the fractional bills were in common use.

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Provisions of nearly every kind are extremely scarce and high. Common coarse salt, worth 25 or 30 cents in New-York, was sold for \$15 a sack; new, \$1.50 a pound; bacon almost impossible to be had at any price. The mistress of one of these slaves had paid \$10 the day before for a small ham. The commonest hog, ordinarily worth 75 cents a pair, sold for \$1 and 45, while for hogs the price was \$50. Two regiments from North Carolina were sent home a few days since. They were so pressed

by hunger that they broke into the bakeries and seized their contents, offering North Carolina money in payment, and when that was refused as worthless, they carried off the bread defiantly. Many of the country troops had died from the use of army biscuits, and the Commissary Department was obliged to issue corn for the soldiers' rations. Cotton thread is 25 cents a spool; needles a hundred times the usual price; matches one cent each; and it is a curious illustration of the Southern lack of mechanical ingenuity that though they succeeded in manufacturing a few matches, they cannot make the boxes to hold them. Very little business is done in the city. The stores are mostly closed, their stocks of goods being exhausted without means of renewal. Fugitives are constantly leaving the city for the interior, and others preparing to move at the moment of assault. It is universally asserted and believed that the place is to be attacked by a concerted movement on all sides on the 15th of April, with overwhelming land and naval forces. The necessity of surrender, and the policy of giving up the place without fighting, since it must eventually fall, are openly discussed in the city; and it is not long since a party of officers came to blows on the question in a public conversation. Troops have lately been sent from Charleston to Georgetown, S. C., in expectation of an attack. On the line of road from Charleston to Savannah are about 30,000 troops. In rear of the city are very few cannon, and only two have been mounted.

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